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Letter dated 25 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write to draw your attention to recent terrorist activity and violations carried out against Israel, as well as relevant developments in the region, in connection with the briefing on the Middle East, to be delivered by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert H. Serry, before the Security Council on 26 February 2008.

At the outset, I wish to emphasize that these monthly letters reflect the very real, alarming and dangerous reality on the ground that Israel faces. Just this morning, a 10 year-old Israeli boy sustained serious injuries to his shoulder when a Qassam rocket fired by Palestinian terrorists in the northern Gaza Strip landed near his school in Sderot.

Terrorist attacks carried out against Israel and the situation in the Gaza Strip

On 4 February, two Palestinian terrorists carried out a suicide attack against Israeli civilians at a shopping centre in the southern town of Dimona. One Israeli civilian, a 73 year-old woman, was killed and 11 others were wounded, among them one critically and two moderately. The two terrorists were killed during the course of the attack.

Qassam rocket and mortar fire targeting western Negev towns and villages continued with alarming intensity and regularity throughout the month of February, causing heavy casualties, particularly among the civilian population in the city of Sderot. Since the Council's last discussion on the Middle East, more than 200 rockets and mortar shells have been fired at Israel by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip. During January 2008, an average of 12 rockets and mortars were fired each day. If the rate of fire continues, by the end of 2008, over 4,500 rockets and mortars will have been fired by Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.

On 6 February, two girls, ages 2 and 11, were wounded by shrapnel after a Qassam rocket slammed into a playground adjacent to a kindergarten in Sderot.

On 8 and 9 February, a barrage of 40 rockets were fired at Negev towns and villages.

On 11 February, two Qassam rockets landed in the city centre of Sderot, injuring 8 year-old Osher Tuito and his 19 year-old brother, Rami. Doctors were

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forced to amputate Osher's left leg during surgery. Eleven other civilians were treated for shock.

During the past week, from 19 to 21 February, Palestinian terrorists fired over 60 Qassam rockets and approximately 50 mortar shells at Israeli communities in the western Negev.

Data released by NATAL, the Israel Center for Victims of Terror and War, shows that 90 per cent of Sderot residents have experienced a Qassam rocket falling on their street or one adjacent to them. Some 28 per cent of adults and 30 per cent of children suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, with children exhibiting extremely high levels of fear, avoidance behaviour, school, behavioural and somatic problems, regression and sleep deprivation.

Hamas terrorists still hold Corporal Gilad Shalit captive. Since he was kidnapped on 25 June 2006, Hamas has refused to allow the Red Cross or any other humanitarian agency to visit him and verify his condition. The refusal to provide details regarding Gilad Shalit's condition is cause for great alarm.

As mentioned in previous letters, smuggling of weapons, money and other illegal munitions into the Gaza Strip present a grave danger. Hamas uses tunnels, burrowed deep beneath the ground, to move weapons into the Gaza Strip, turning the area into a launching pad for continued attacks and operations against Israel.

My Government has been clear — in words and in deeds — that it will do everything possible to ensure the humanitarian needs of all civilian populations. The flow of electricity to Gaza continues, and Israel works closely with the relevant United Nations and humanitarian agencies on the ground to ensure that the needs of the civilian population are met. The Nahal Oz Crossing remains open for the transfer of fuel and cooking gas, and the Erez Crossing is open for medical emergencies and humanitarian supplies.

Situation in the West Bank

Palestinian terrorism and violence also occurred in the West Bank, including an increase in stabbings, shootings and rock- and Molotov cocktail-throwing incidents.

On 12 February, an Israel Defense Forces soldier was stabbed in the neck by a terrorist. On 15 February, an Israeli woman was slightly injured and two vehicles were damaged when four Molotov cocktails were thrown at her by Palestinians. On 17 February, Palestinian terrorists opened fire on an Israeli bus travelling south of Nablus.

The Israel Defense Forces revealed that, last month, it had intercepted a truck destined for the West Bank carrying hazardous material intended for the assembling of explosive devices, including 800 kilograms of potassium nitrate.

Situation along the Blue Line

As my delegation has underscored in previous correspondence, the situation along the Blue Line remains precarious. From 16 January to 13 February, 53 violations of the Blue Line were recorded, totalling 808 such violations since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). A listing of these violations can be found in the annex to the present letter.

In addition, my delegation calls your attention to four specific areas of concern in connection to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006):

1. **Arms embargo.** Weapons continue to be transferred through the Syrian-Lebanese border, in violation of the arms embargo. Indeed, the 20 October 2007 position paper submitted by the Lebanese Government to the Security Council implicates Syria in facilitating the transfer of weapons. This is an issue of great concern for international security.

2. **Rearming of Hizbullah.** Moreover, some of these weapons are destined for areas south of the Litani River, where a rearmed Hizbullah maintains a formidable presence. Hizbullah's rearming violates resolution 1701 (2006), and threatens the stability of the region.

3. **The two abducted Israeli soldiers.** Udi Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, kidnapped on 12 July 2006 by Hizbullah, remain held by their captors, without any sign of life given or visit by the Red Cross. Resolution 1701 (2006) is explicit in its call for the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli soldiers, and my delegation calls upon the Council to implement these provisions, without delay.

4. **Demarcation of the Blue Line.** Israel hopes that marking the Blue Line, as well as placing warning signs, will be instrumental in preventing future incidents. The incident on 7 January 2008, in the Halta area, underscores the need and urgency of demarcating the Blue Line.

State support for terrorist organizations

My delegation has consistently urged for an end to all Palestinian violence and terrorism against Israel. Palestinian terrorism remains the greatest obstacle to peace and security in the region. The Palestinian leadership must stop the violence, dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, end the cycle of impunity and bring the terrorists to justice.

Furthermore, we have underscored that terrorist organizations in our region operate with the support and backing of States, namely Syria and Iran. A case in point is Iran's hosting of a representative of Hamas within its borders, in blatant violation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which provides an overall framework for the obligation of States to refrain from supporting and funding terrorism. Syria too violates resolution 1373 (2001), as it serves as the headquarters for numerous terrorist organizations, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, where Khaled Mashaal and Ramadan Abdullah, their respective leaders, both reside.

On 4 February, following the aforementioned terrorist attack in Dimona, Dr. Abu-Osama Abed Al-Ma'ati — a known Hamas terrorist leader who is hosted by the Iranian Government — threatened Israel with a new wave of suicide bombings. "We ceased to carry out these attacks for a year, but the enemy persisted with its aggression and the violations to the ceasefire. The Dimona attack is a message. That message is that Iz al-Din al-Qassam [sic] has renewed the suicide attacks."

The Security Council, of course, has already condemned terrorism against Israel in the strongest possible terms, as referred to in the Council's press statement of 28 February 2005 (SC/8325). Moreover, in resolution 1624 (2005), the Council condemned the incitement and attempts at the justification of terrorist attacks also in

the strongest terms. In this regard, resolution 1624 (2005) calls upon States to prevent such conduct and prohibit incitement by law. In issuing the aforementioned statement, Hamas — whose operational command comes from inside Iran and Syria — has pledged itself to continue to murder Israelis, undermine the hopes and aspirations of the Israeli and Palestinian people to reach a peaceful agreement, and violate the will of the international community.

In contrast, responsible States fulfil their obligations to protect their citizens, and Israel will continue to act in self-defence, in accordance with its inherent right under article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Similarly, Israel carries out its counter-terrorist operations with respect to the applicable rules of international law, and in particular international humanitarian law.

Incitement and threats by Iran

Pursuant to my delegation's recent correspondence with the United Nations, I wish also to point to the number of highly alarming and sinister remarks made by senior members of the Iranian leadership, including its President, threatening the State of Israel, in the most offensive of terms.

On 20 February, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told an audience in Tehran, "World Powers have created a black and dirty microbe named the Zionist regime, and have unleashed it like a savage animal on the nations of the region". It is wholly inexplicable and unjustifiable that the leadership of a State Member of the United Nations would threaten another Member State and liken it to a "dirty microbe". These threats blatantly violate the Charter, as well as article III (c) of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which is explicit in its demand for States to punish and prosecute those that carry out "direct and public incitement to commit genocide".

Israel calls upon the international community to condemn without reservation these outrageous anti-Israel, anti-Semitic and racist threats, which undoubtedly constitute direct and public incitement to commit genocide. Similarly, the international community should demand that States refrain from aiding and abetting terrorist organizations, and cease incitement to violence, provocations and support for terrorism.

Excellency, in closing, I wish to underscore that Israel remains committed to the bilateral process with the moderate Palestinian Authority leadership that embraces its responsibilities and the two-State vision. Despite the escalation of terrorist activity and rocket attacks, Israeli leaders have continued to meet with their moderate Palestinian counterparts and move forward on negotiations.

At the same time, support for the moderates means that the extremists must be isolated. Hamas, in rhetoric and in action, has shown it has no interest in the establishment of a State. It does not seek to win rights for the Palestinians. Rather, its sole platform is to deny the rights of others, namely through vicious terrorism and violence against Israel. Any support for Hamas, directly or indirectly, weakens the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and jeopardizes the prospects of reaching an agreement. There is no future for the Palestinian people with Hamas, and Israel will continue to combat the terrorism that Hamas generates.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 25 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Blue Line violation report

Serial number of violation	Date and time of incident	Location of incident	Description of incident
752	2008/16/01 14:15	N468 (UTM 749774/687346)	One armed Lebanese civilian with three shepherds and medium sized flock of sheep were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
753	2008/07/01 14:00	N467 (UTM 748700/685750)	Three Lebanese civilians with a medium sized herd of sheep crossed the Blue Line approximately 200 meters into Israeli territory at the mentioned UTM.
754	01/17/2008 10:43	E435A (UTM 744581/68244)	One Lebanese civilian, Jafer Muhammed Abdu Mustafa from Arab el Louaize, crossed the Blue Line 180 meters into Israeli territory at the mentioned UTM. He was detained by IDF forces and questions on the spot. He was sent back across the Blue Line after coordination with UNIFIL forces.
755	2008/18/01 13:06	8-36 (UTM 735111/668058)	One armed Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.

756	01/18/2008 11:53	N467 (UTM 749008/686105)	One Lebanese civilian with a herd of sheep crossed the Blue Line 25 meters into Israeli territory at the above mentioned UTM.
757	2008/21/01 16:14	6-52 (UTM 731713/665475)	One armed Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
758	01/22/2008 11:45	8-34 (UTM 736420/674122)	One armed Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
760	2008/23/01 15:39	W425B (UTM 731734/665126)	One armed Lebanese civilians was observed firing his weapon into the air at the above mentioned UTM.
761	01/26/2008 12:15	N648 (UTM 750415/687257)	Two Lebanese civilians with a small sized herd of sheep crossed the Blue Line 60 meters into Israeli territory at the mentioned UTM
762	2008/26/01 15:37	W425 (UTM 730779/665128)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
763	2008/27/01 15:15	W418 (UTM 7185/6604)	A laser beam was pointed at an Israeli tank in the vicinity of IDF position W418, from the direction of Ayta Ash Sha'b.
765	2008/30/01 15:23	8-32 (UTM 736182/675033)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
766	2008/31/01 8:38	8-34 (UTM 736597/673763)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
767	2008/31/01 09:26	8-34 (UTM 736176/673970)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians were observed at the above mentioned UTM.

768	2008/31/01 11:00	8-34 (UTM 736366/674145)	Three **armed** Lebanese civilians were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
769	2008/31/01 13:25	9-66 (UTM 740515/685894)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians were observed firing their weapons into the air IVO the above mentioned UTM.
770	2008/31/01 15:30	8-32 (UTM 736182/675034)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
771	2008/01/02 07:00	9-15 (UTM 738698/684455)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
772	2008/01/02 12:06	E430 (UTM 732967/666547)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
773	2008/01/02 11:54	N468 (UTM 749458/686975)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
774	2008/01/02 12:05	N468 (UTM 749008/686875)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
775	02/01/2008 12:50	8-32 (UTM 735848/67529)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
776	2008/01/02 12:15	N468 (UTM 749248/686895)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
777	2008/01/02 15:10	9-15 (UTM 738868/684773)	One Lebanese civilian threw stones at the Technical Fence at the above mentioned UTM
778	2008/01/02 15:30	E430 (UTM 732510/665703)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.

779	2008/01/02 15:30	E430 (UTM 732510/665703)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
780	2008/09/02 16:50	W425 (UTM 731715/664840)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
781	2008/02/02 09:00	N468 (UTM 7479288/686835)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
782	2008/02/02 16:45	W407 (UTM 710575/664117)	A laser beam was pointed at an Israeli tank in the vicinity of IDF position W407 from the direction of northwest from within Lebanese territory.
783	02/03/2008 08:45	8-34 (UTM 735736/673858)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
784	2008/03/02 09:35	6-52 (UTM 729721/666423)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
785	2008/03/02 10:05	W425 (UTM 733230/667005)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
786	2008/03/02 12:13	N468 (UTM 749848/687725)	Two Lebanese shepherds, one armed, were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
787	2008/03/02 14:52	W425B (UTM 733414/665557)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
788	2008/03/02 15:22	W425 (UTM 731914/664986)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
789	2008/04/02 11:30	N468 (UTM 750388/689455)	One **armed** Lebanese Shepherd with a herd of sheep was observed at the above mentioned UTM.

790	2008/05/02 10:30	E430 (UTM 735551/667752)	One Lebanese civilian crossed the Blue Line 130 meters into Israeli territory at the mentioned UTM.
791	2008/05/02 10:30	E430 (UTM 735551/667752)	One Lebanese civilian crossed the Blue Line 130 meters into Israeli territory at the mentioned UTM.
792	2008/06/02 15:52	E434 (UTM 736425/672858)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians crossed the Blue Line 100 meters into Israeli territory at the above mentioned UTM.
793	2008/05/02 15:00	W425A (UTM 729248/665376)	Three Lebanese civilians were observed at the above mentioned UTM. One of them was armed and shot twice into the air.
794	2008/06/02 10:40	E434 (UTM 736494/672491)	Three **armed** Lebanese civilians crossed the Blue Line 250 meters into Israeli territory at the above mentioned UTM.
795	2008/06/02 13:15	4-13 (UTM 749877/690074)	Four Lebanese civilians, three armed, were observed at the above mentioned UTM.
797	2008/07/02 12:03	N468 (UTM 749961/687569)	Two Lebanese shepherds, one armed, were observed with a herd of sheep at the above mentioned UTM.
798	2008/08/02 16:40	W425B (UTM 731339/664792)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
799	2008/09/02 10:20	E430 (UTM 7332724/666981)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
800	2008/09/02 16:50	W425 (UTM 731715/664840)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.

801	2007/10/02 12:45	9-15 (UTM 738168/683425)	One Lebanese civilian threw stones at an IDF vehicle at the above mentioned UTM.
802	2008/10/02 11:58	8-33 (UTM 735669/677586)	Three **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
803	2008/10/02 12:59	E-432 (UTM 735889/669232)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
804	02/10/2008 16:53	E432 (UTM 735118/667908)	Two **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed firing his weapon into the air at the above mentioned UTM.
805	2008/10/02 15:03	6-50 (UTM 723369/662102)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
807	2008/13/02 09:37	E432(UTM 723369/662102)	Three **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed at the above mentioned UTM.
808	2008/13/02 11:18	W416 (UTM 717082/663955)	One **armed** Lebanese civilians was observed shooting to the air at the above mentioned UTM.